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Written Testimony for the Little Hoover Commission
On the Effectiveness of the State Office of Criminal Justice Planning (OCJP)
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Thank you for the opportunity to present written as well as verbal testimony to the Commission before this hearing. I was asked by our Chairperson, Orange County Sheriff Michael S. Carona to make this presentation on behalf of the Council.

My personal experience with the Office of Criminal Justice Planning (OCJP) dates back to almost thirty years having worked in grants awarded by the regional planning unit in the Fresno region as well as grants awarded by the state office. Also, in 1979-1980, I was on loan from the Fresno Police Department to OCJP to assist in the capacity of program manager and law enforcement consultant to help in the implementation of the California Career Criminal Apprehension Program (CCAP). Within a matter of months, I was moved into the position of Chief, Program Development, supervised the agency's program managers, and oversaw the program operations division of the office. During this time, the federal funding agency, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) was eliminated and my division oversaw the closure of the regional planning units and took program oversight of the outstanding grants where reporting obligations to LEAA still existed.

After my tenure with OCJP, I returned to the Fresno Police Department and over the years my involvement with OCJP has been as a manager of grants awarded to the Department, either directly from OCJP or directly by federal agencies with reporting obligation through OCJP. Additionally, I have been a Council member, representing the Assembly through the Speaker's office, starting with then Speaker Cruz Bustamante and reappointed by other Assembly Speakers.

I apologize for providing information that the Commission may already be aware of but I believe that I provide it in context of a foundation to my presentation as to the effectiveness of OCJP. OCJP was legislatively established in 1968 as California's planning agency to work under the direction of the California's CCCJ to administer federal criminal justice system block grants. The intent of these block grants was to improve the operations of the criminal and juvenile justice system. OCJP was to oversee system improvements that met local as well as statewide needs. OCJP, with the oversight of CCCJ, was to establish funding priorities within these priorities, and fund them accordingly based on federal and state appropriations. Along the way, the California legislature also provided funding for various programs such as victim-witness assistance, community crime resistance, Indian Justice, career criminal apprehension and prosecution, gang suppression and others. The implementation of these programs was at the local level but the state maintained program oversight to insure compliance with the state guidelines. As I stated previously, when the federal agency, LEAA, was eliminated,

its programs that had been funded and were still operational, came under the oversight umbrella of OCJP.

Also over time, other programs were started through other state agencies that maybe should have been coordinated through OCJP. I understand the fact that some of these programs (such as victim-witness assistance and crime prevention and education) were started in departments headed by state constitutional officers and/or were directed there by the legislature.

About OCJP's present and future role, I believe that it is already appropriately defined. OCJP is also already recognized by federal agencies, such as the National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance and others, as the coordinator of state criminal justice policy and programs. The Governor has designated OCJP as the coordinator of block grant planning and funding distributor. This role should be maintained. No other state agency has that mandate and no agency has the experience and history in managing that role.

One critical element has been eroded over time that I personally believe should be resurrected as a critical component of its statutory mandate. Oversight of OCJP's strategic program planning and long term criminal justice planning and coordination has not been managed as appropriately as it should. In my opinion, CCCJ has not been asked to review program guidelines or funding priorities as may be required by statute. I don't have an understanding of the reasons, but it is quite clear that CCCJ has not been made part of the loop in evaluating the funding priorities or even in guiding public policy on criminal justice coordinating efforts that would not only improve our system of justice but also place us on the cutting edge of technology.

Finally, OCJP was required to report program status to CCCJ at its monthly meetings. OCJP and CCCJ used to have coordinating semi-annual and/or annual training conferences of its various programs. These mediums ensured that coordination was taking place not only within the programs, but more importantly, across the programs as it was often required by program guidelines, when necessary, that partnerships be formed for better planning, development and implementation of program goals and objectives. From these meetings and conferences, communication barriers were broken, best practices were identified and shared resources became common practice as agencies communicated program vision, mission and goals.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to speak before the Commission. If there is anything else I can offer, please feel free to contact me.